



A CARICATURE IN LACE—ITALIAN, SIXTEENTH CENTURY  
A strip used for curtain, valance, or counterpane

# LACE AND LACE MAKING

By ESTHER SINGLETON

## MENTOR GRAVURES

VENETIAN RAISED POINT  
Chalice Veil, 1650

POINT D'ALENÇON

VALENCIENNES, THREE  
SPECIMENS  
Eighteenth century



BLACK CHANTILLY FAN MOUNT  
Nineteenth century

## MENTOR GRAVURES

PILLOW AND BOBBINS

MECHLIN  
Greatly magnified

COURT TRAIN OF IRISH  
POINT  
Made for Queen Mary  
of England

"Wisdom with periwigs, with cassocks grace,  
Courage with swords, gentility with lace."—*Connoisseur*

"To know the age and pedigrees  
Of points of Flanders and Venise."—*Hudibras*



LIKE old violins, old lace makes a direct appeal to the romantic fancy. But Venetian, Alençon, Brussels, Mechlin and Honiton carry us farther than a Stradivarius, a Guarnerius, or an Amati; for rich lace belongs to the class of heirlooms. Treasured from generation to generation, lace gains, in addition to its intrinsic beauty, a sort of atmosphere that makes the beholder think instinctively of the personages who owned it and of the brilliant scenes amid which it was worn.

Artistic lace, with designs of flowers, figures and scrolls upon a cobweb of threads, was first made in the sixteenth century. It reached perfection in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In common with many other beautiful arts, the home of lace-making was Italy. When the Sforza (sfort-sah) property was divided in 1493 the inventory of Beatrice d'Este (dess-te), Duchess of Milan (Este—a famous old princely Italian family), gives a list of fine laces that fell to her share. The first portraits in which lace occurs are of the early Florentine School; and to these we must go, as we do to inventories, sumptuary laws (*i. e.* laws regulating private expenditure) and contemporary documents, for knowledge of ancient lace.



# LACE AND LACE MAKING



EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY GERMAN LACIS, OR DARNED NETTING  
Representing the story of David and Goliath

Lace appears in the old inventories of France and England, in company with braid and gimp, as *passament*, or *passement*. A descriptive adjective usually tells if it is made of gold, silver, silk, or linen threads. *Passament dentelé* (toothed, from the French *dent*, tooth) occurs in the inventory of Henri II of France (1547-1559); but the fine *dentelle* (dahn-tell) *de Florence*, which Marguerite, sister of François II, owned in 1545, brings us a little nearer to the French word for lace,—*dentelle*.



ITALIAN POINT, SEVENTEENTH CENTURY  
Used for collars and cuffs, and to trim large ruffs

The word *lacis* (lah-see) was used by the poet, Skelton (1460-1529), to describe braid. His line is "The sampler to sew on, the lacis to embraid." It was a cord or braid. The word lace appears in the Bible; but the translators used the word to define braid; for the open-worked and decorative adornment that we call lace,\* was described in the reign of James I as "purls," "points" and "cut-work."

The earliest open-worked lace is Reticella (ret-tee-chel'-lah), or Gotico (got'-tee-co). Needlepoint Guipure (gee-pure') is another name for it. It is stiff, with geometrical open-worked patterns and a spiky edge. We see it in nearly all the early Italian and Flemish portraits.

Guipure is applied to all large patterned laces with coarse grounds, and which have no *brides* (breed) (or joinings of threads from pattern to pattern) and no delicate *réseau* (ray-so, meaning network). In old days Guipure was used to define a gold, or silver, braid, worn only by the rich and on the livery of the king's servants. The "tape guipures" of Italy and Flanders were famous. Black silk guipure was made chiefly at Le Puy (leh pwée), France.

Early Reticellas were made of stiff threads, button-holed over and having little spiky knots at regular intervals. Patterns gradually became

\*Perhaps the first application of the word lace to describe that open-worked fabric of linen with inwrought or applied patterns occurs in Watreman's *Fardle Facions* (1555), which says "The men sat at home spinning and working of lace."



# LACE AND LACE MAKING

more ornate: circles, wheels, triangles and so forth were systematically arranged, as anyone can see who examines the lace collars and cuffs in the portraits of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The home of this lace was the Ionian Islands, but its manufacture spread from Italy throughout Europe. "Cut-work," or drawn-thread work, was also a name for Reticella. Its effect is the same as the geometric needlepoint lace. "Cut-work" was made for three centuries, with few changes. The old patterns were handed down for generations. *Lacis* (lah-see), darned netting, or "spiderwork" is known today as *filet* (fee-lay). It was very popular in Italy. Siena was so famous for it that one of its names is "Siena Point." The pattern is simply darned with the needle upon a plain ground of coarse net. *Lacis* lent itself to all kinds of designs, from small squares with simple patterns to large ones with intricate pictures, religious or secular. *Lacis* was made in long strips, or in separate squares, and joined. It was much used for table-cloths, bed-hangings, and other household decoration.

Catherine de' Medici (deh may'-dee-chee) had a bed draped with such squares. She kept her handmaidens busy making them. Her inventory gives 381 unmounted squares in one coffer and 533 in another.

*Lacis* seems to have been an old art before Vinciola (vin-chee-o'-la), a most celebrated designer, published his book of patterns in Venice in 1587.

*Lacis* was sometimes combined with Reticella, as is shown in the pattern-book of Isabella Catanea Parasole (1616).

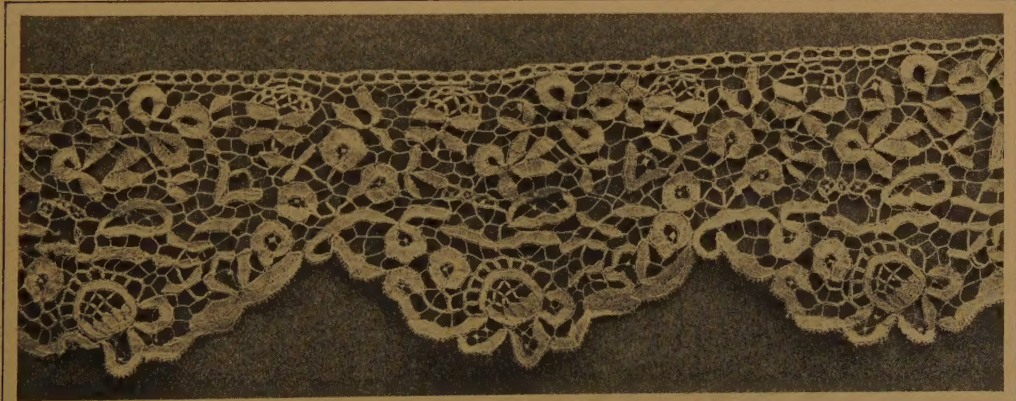
## *Whence Came Lace?*

In the sixteenth century a new type of lace became popular, its elegance harmonizing with the splendid costumes of the Renaissance. The exquisite Point Lace, poetically



ITALIAN POINT, SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The kind that appears as the collar in the portraits of Marie de' Medici



HONITON

Tradition says that the worker was paid as many shillings as would cover the lace



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called *Punto in aria* (stitch in the air), with its motives of graceful scrolls and lovely flowers, was developed in Venice. In early days its patterns show affinity with the arabesques of Persian ornament. Whence came this exquisite art, which Arachne\* herself cannot imitate?

Antiquaries have sought in vain for its origin. Lace seems to have been unknown to the Far East, and Egyptian discoveries yield nothing but drawn-work, cut-work and embroidery in the way of artistic manipulation of threads. The home of diaphanous lace is still a mystery.

But it was perfected in the city that "held the gorgeous East in fee." May we not believe that lace, like *intarsia* (or inlaid work of bone and ebony), damascened metal and richly-colored ceramics, also came from Eastern sources? Lace, moreover, may have been derived from the Saracens of Sicily, or from the Greeks of the Morea, the Ionian Islands or Constantinople. That the darned netting (*lakis*) has a Byzantine appearance nobody will deny.

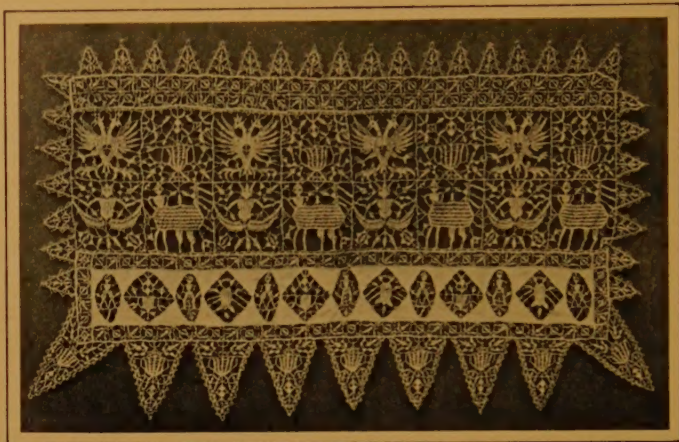
### *Point Lace and Pillow Lace*

There are only two kinds of hand-made lace: Point Lace and Pillow Lace. The first is made with the needle, and is called Needlepoint, or simply Point; the second is made with bobbins on a pillow, and is called Pillow Lace.

The name Pillow Lace is unfortunate, because lace of *all* kinds is supported on a pillow while being made, no matter whether the maker uses her needle, plies the bobbins, or simply knots the threads with her fingers.

Point Lace gets its name from the French *point* (pwan), a stitch. Its French name is *Point d'aiguille* (pwan dagwee), literally, the point of the needle—needlepoint, as we say. The name has been given to some laces to denote superiority of workmanship, as in the case of *Point d'Angleterre* (pwan dongletare), *Point de Valenciennes* (pwan deh val-lon'-see-enn), *Point de Malines* (pwan deh mah-leen), *Punto di Milano* (poon-toe dee mee-lah-no) and Honiton (hon-ee-ton) Point, which are not Point laces at all, but Pillow laces, as they are made with bobbins. This still further confuses the classification of lace.

In order to determine to which class any specimen belongs, the *toile* (twah-lay), solid part of the pattern, and the ground-work should both be examined through a magnifying glass. The ground is either a network of



ITALIAN POINT  
Made in the Tyrol about 1650

\*Arachne was, in Greek legend, a maiden who challenged the goddess Athene to a contest in weaving and was changed by Athene into a spider



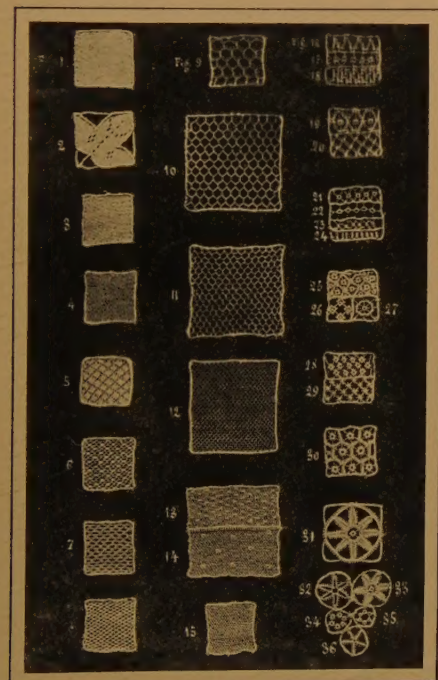
# LACE AND LACE MAKING

fine threads, called *réseau*; or it consists of slender threads, or ties, called *brides*, which connect the different parts of the patterns. The *brides* are frequently tipped here and there with little spikes, or knots, called *picots* (pee-co). The edge of the pattern is also sometimes decorated with these *picot* tips. In some laces the ground consists of both *réseau* and *brides*.

No matter how intricate the pattern and no matter from what country the specimen comes, there is but *one kind of stitch* in all varieties of Point Lace. This stitch is the familiar looped, or "button-hole" stitch.

In Point Lace the solid parts are always made of rows of looped stitches, closely worked, or loosely worked, with small open spaces left in the patterns. When *réseau* (network) is used for the background, the meshes are made of loosely looped stitches. Sometimes the needle is twisted twice in each stitch to keep the mesh open.

When *brides* are used they are made of one thread, or two threads, fastened across the patterns; and these *brides* are closely button-holed over. The *picot* ornamentation is also button-holed over.



LACE NET, OR RÉSEAU

Nos. 1, 2 and 3 are Venetian stitches. Nos. 4 to 15 are various kinds of nets. Nos. 16 to 36 are patterns—stars, circles, wheels, lattice work, etc., used for decorative fillings

Pillow Lace (or, more properly, Bobbin Lace) is altogether different. The *toile* is composed of threads that cross each other, more or less at right angles, like the threads of woven materials. The *brides* consist of twisted, or plaited, threads and the *picots* of single loops.

Pillow Lace is divided into two classes: (1) The pattern is worked first on the pillow and the *réseau* (network) filled in afterwards. To this class belong *Punto di Milano*, Brussels Pillow (*Point d'Angleterre*) and Honiton. (2) The pattern and the *réseau* (network) are made in one piece on the pillow.

While Venice continued to make and export magnificent Point, Genoa and Milan did a large trade in Pillow Lace. A great deal of the lace that we see in the portraits of this period is the coarse and heavy Genoa Bobbin, with denticulate edges. The "wheat-grain"\* ornamentation is a characteristic. This lace was suited for boot-tops, garters, shoe-

roses, collars and cuffs and scarfs. It did not go out of fashion until 1660.

Centuries ago our English ancestors called Pillow Lace "Bone-lace" (Sir Thomas More went to his execution in a ruff trimmed with Bone-lace),

\* This is also a characteristic of Maltese lace, as was natural, because Genoa workers were taken to Malta in 1833, to start the lace industry there.



## LACE AND LACE MAKING

because the bobbins were made of bone. When we remember this, the line in "Twelfth Night":

"The spinsters and the knitters in the sun  
And the free maids that weave their threads with bone."

gains in picturesqueness; and we see the lace-makers busy in the sunshine with their pillows and bobbins.

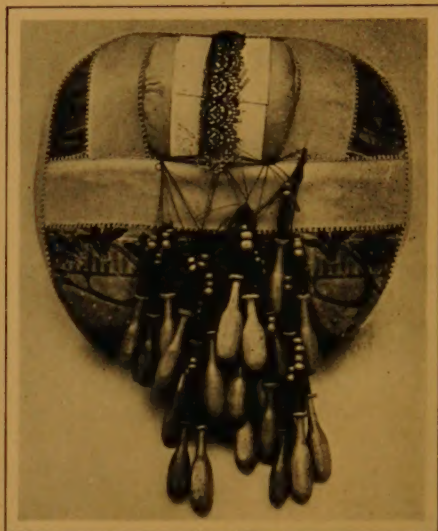
### *Lace in the Sixteenth Century*

It was not until the sixteenth century that lace-making became a lay industry. In England it was long called "Nun's work." Pale sisters toiled over needles and bobbins in the convents with the same patience and eyes trained to minute vision that the monks used for their illuminated manuscripts. Throughout Europe lace was made in wealthy homes, and some women founded workshops and schools. The wife of the Doge Grimaldi, who set up a workshop in Venice and employed 130 women at her own expense, was not an exception.

Wars, persecutions and conquests shifted people of all classes from country to country. The bloody sword of Alva sent thousands of Flemish refugees into England and France. In 1564 a colony of lace-makers settled in Honiton, Devonshire, bringing their patterns and methods with them. No wonder then that Honiton Point closely resembles an open kind of Belgian lace of which large "sprigs" are characteristic.

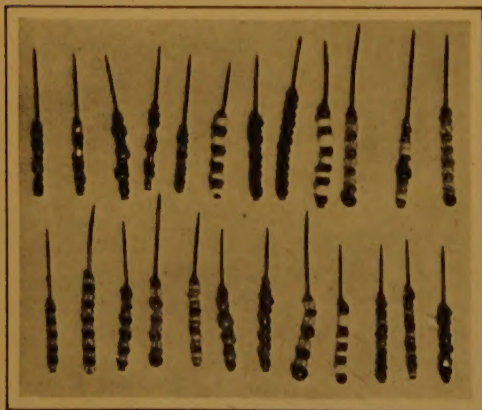
Flanders disputes with Italy the invention of both needlepoint and bobbin lace as hotly as she disputes the art of writing madrigals. But whether she stands first or not with regard to this invention, her lace-workers, scattered by the "Spanish Fury," taught the making of bobbin laces to every country of northern Europe. For instance, Barbara Uttmann, who introduced the making of bobbin lace into Germany, learned the work from a Fleming.

In England, the Fleming "Trolle Kant" became known as trolly lace, the trolly being a thick outlining cord, or *cordonnnet* (core-don'-nay). Trolly lace was quite expensive. It was much worn in the eighteenth century, and frequently figures in the advertisements in American newspapers.



PILLOW WITH BOBBINS

Showing on it a strip of Pillow Lace nearly completed



BEADED PINS

Used in outlining the pattern in Pillow Lace



# LACE AND LACE MAKING

Brussels, Antwerp (with its pot of flowers) and Mechlin were all known and imitated in England in the sixteenth century. Belgium, at that time, claimed the lace of Lille (resembling Mechlin) and also that of Valenciennes, then in the province of Hainault (ay'-no). A great deal of fine lace went to Spain from Flanders; for, in the sixteenth century Flanders was a part of the Spanish domain. Charles V, a native of Ghent,\* commanded lace making to be taught in all the Belgian schools. Preferring the Netherlands to the foreign country over which he ruled, he carried as much of their atmosphere as he could into Spain. Furniture-makers, engravers, painters, tapestry-weavers, lace-makers and other artisans were transported in large numbers. Spanish workers were in return sent to the Low Countries. Consequently there was an interchange of styles between Spain and the Netherlands.



VENETIAN ROSE POINT  
The most complicated of laces

## *The Lace Industry in France*

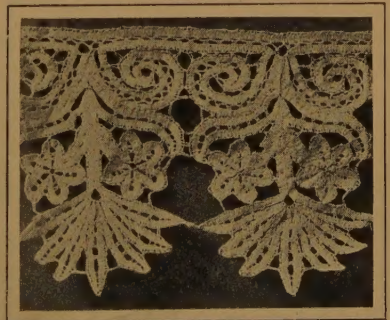
Catherine de' Medici set the fashion for lace in France. She brought in her suite from Florence F. Vinciola, who was appointed pattern-maker for laces and needlework to the court. He published a number of pattern books in Paris, chiefly for needlepoint and darned net. During the reign of Henri III (1574-1589) lace began to be more important, especially as an edging to the frilled ruffs that men and women both wore. In the last days of Henri IV (1589-1610) ruffs gave place to turned over collars of linen edged with lace; these were followed by small

turned down collars made entirely of lace. Next came the tall fan-shaped "Medici Collar," brought from Italy by Marie de' Medici.

Pattern-books of importance were now published. Lace began to be used on everything; but, even so, the French trade was not large. Those who spent the most money for lace purchased "Venetian Points."

Cardinal Mazarin (maz'-za-rehn) tried to suppress the importation of foreign laces and to improve the home manufactures by introducing patterns from Italy. But it was Colbert (coll-bare), Louis XIV's prime minister, who made French lace an item of trade. He said: "Fashion should be to France what the mines of Peru were to Spain."

However, ten years before Colbert said this Le Puy (leh pwee) had become a center for lace-making, and the Duchesse de Longueville (doo-shess deh long-veel), Condé's sister, had brought lace-makers to



ITALIAN PILLOW (OR BOBBIN)  
Seventeenth century. The so-called "tape" variety

\* English pronunciation "gent," with the hard "g." French pronunciation "gahn," with the nasal "n."



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Chantilly (shon-tee-yee). Colbert now established his famous school near Alençon, taught by lace-makers from Venice. Other workshops were founded in Le Quesnoy, Arras, Rheims, Paris, Sedan and Argentan.

*Point d'Alençon*  
(pwan dal-lon'-sohn)  
or "*Point de France*"

was at first an exact imitation of Venetian Point, but soon the clever French invented a beautiful *réseau* (network) of needlework, imitated from the bobbin network ground of Flemish lace. This was a novelty; for Point lace had never before been grounded on net. How human eyes and human fingers can produce this is a marvel, for an authority tells us:

"The average size of a diagonal, taken from angle to angle, in an Alençon, or so-called Argentan, hexagon, is about one-sixth of an inch, and each side of the hexagon is about one-tenth of an inch. An idea of the minuteness of the work can be formed from the fact that a side of the hexagon would be overcast with some nine or ten button-hole stitches."

### *Fashions in Lace*

Those who have made a study of old portraits, prints, and costume-plates, realize how much use has been made of lace at all periods. Lace was always considered by the fashionable world the most exquisite of adornments. It is not by accident, nor in satire, that an engraving called "The Prodigal Son," by Abraham Bosse, a celebrated French engraver of the seventeenth century, represents the richly dressed mother holding out to her repentant child a large collar trimmed with splendid lace. Any properly constituted "blood" of the period would have returned from the pigs and husks for such an inducement.

This was just the kind of collar that Frans Hals loved to paint with sure, swift strokes of his magic brush; and exactly such lace is seen in the portraits by Porbus, Coques, Rembrandt, Rubens and Van Dyck.

What a bewildering array of lace-trimmed articles and of furbelows and fineries made of lace comes to memory as we think of the "Fashion Parade" of the past! Here they come: great circular ruffs, collars and cuffs, falling collars,



WHITE SILK SPANISH LACE  
Nineteenth century



MILAN PILLOW (OR BOBBIN)  
With many ornamental stitches



# LACE AND LACE MAKING

Medici ruffs, cravats, scarfs, garters, shoe-roses, lace-trimmed boots, shirts, handkerchiefs, masks, fans, caps, aprons, three-tiered "commodes," "Brussels-heads," lappets, falbalas, flounces, wrist-ruffles, berthes, barbes, shawls, parasols—in all styles and shapes, and of many patterns, textures and weaves. Where should we begin a short survey of artistic lace—where should we end?

When we remember the hundreds of portraits in European galleries showing the subject holding in his, or her, hand a lace-trimmed handkerchief, the hand itself framed by a cuff of lace, or transparent lawn, lace-trimmed, we are fain to believe that the artists loved to paint lace as much as their sitters loved to wear it.

The enormous ruff tipped with lace that came into fashion about 1540, and which in England was called the "French ruff" and in France the "English monster," was edged in England with "Bone lace," much of which was made by the Flemish refugees in Dover and Honiton. These ruffs required much lace, but not so much as those that Queen Elizabeth wore. Twenty-five yards of Bone-lace were necessary to trim one of those huge filmy butterflies rising above her head. The Queen had a yellow neck, and the style helped her hide it. So she wore higher ruffs than anybody in the world except the Queen of Navarre; and she piled finery on them—jewels, pearls, lace and golden threads.\* Her special taste was for the laces of Flanders and the "cutworks" and "points" of Italy. Her court followed her taste, although much "Bone-lace" and Spanish lace were worn. The latter Katherine of Aragon had introduced.

Though the Puritans frowned on lace—we may read Stubbs' history to know how ferociously—it is interesting to remember that when Crom-

well's body lay in state it was draped with the most splendid Flemish Point. In the reign of Charles II, the English court wore lace in profusion. Gallants even filled their wide boot-tops with rich ruffles, Cinq-Mars (sank-mahr), who died in



BRUSSELS POINT FAN MOUNT  
Nineteenth century. Showing floral designs



BLACK CHANTILLY LACE SHAWL

The kind our grandmothers used to draw through a wedding-ring to prove its delicacy

\*See Mentor No. 124 for a gravure picture of Queen Elizabeth in the court costume here referred to.



## LACE AND LACE MAKING

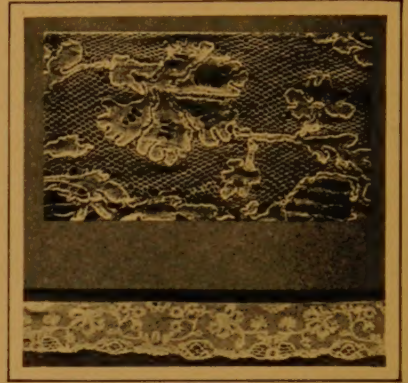
1642, left three hundred lace-trimmed boots. The demand for Flemish Point in England occasioned smuggling on a large scale, and Parliament, wishing to protect English lace, passed an act prohibiting all importations. But the wealthy English would have their rich Flemish lace; and to supply them the merchants bought lace in Belgium, smuggled it into England and sold it as "Point d'Angleterre," or "English Point." Under that name it often went to France. This is corroborated by the Venetian ambassador to the English court, who wrote home in 1695: "Venetian Point is no longer in fashion; but that called English Point, which you know is not made here, but in Flanders, and only bears the name English Point to distinguish it from the others."

This lace was Brussels Point. However, a good deal of "English Point" (which is not Point but Pillow) was made at Honiton by the descendants of Alva's refugees, in "sprigs" and patterns resembling the kind of Belgian lace we now call *Duchesse* (also a Pillow Lace).

At this period Louis XIV was proudly buying Alençon and Argentan. At the King's fête at Marly (1679) when the ladies retired at sunset to dress for the ball, each found in her room a dress trimmed with exquisite Point. To the Siamese ambassadors the King gave in 1685 cravats and ruffles of "French Point."

William and Mary, of England, who seem to have run every mania into the ground, were as wildly excited over lace as over china. The Queen's lace bill for one year was £1,918 (\$9,590). William's was three times as much. This was the age of lace ruffles, lappets, commodes, and the loosely twisted Steenkirks that were named from the battle of Steenkirk (1692). Queen Anne's list of laces mentions Brussels and Mechlin. Every gentleman now had at least two Point Lace cravats; but the fair ladies, though fond of their lace, cared still more for china, for, if we may believe Addison, "The women exchanged their Flanders Point for punch bowls and mandarins."

Nevertheless, the belles filled their long "pagoda sleeves" with Mechlin, Brussels and Honiton, and the beaux concealed love letters in their "weeping ruffles." If we may credit the satirists, lace was worn in "High Life Below Stairs"; butlers, they say, refused to carve the "Roast Beef of Old England" for



MECHLIN

The pattern and network are made at the same time on the pillow



VENETIAN RAISED POINT



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# LACE AND LACE MAKING

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fear of spoiling the ruffles they, too, wore at their wrists. But if ruffles descended, aprons came up in favor. They were soon dismissed again, for Beau Nash tore off the Duchess of Queensbury's apron at Bath, which cost two hundred guineas (\$1,000) and was of the richest Point, exclaiming as he did so that "none but Abigails appeared in white aprons."

In the days of Louis XV France subjected lace to strict etiquette. There were "summer" laces and "winter" laces. The lovely soft "blonde" came in fashion in 1745 and increased in popularity when Marie Antoinette appeared in the French Court. She used it for the fichu (fee-shoo) of which she was so fond.

The French Revolution killed lace for a time, and many lace-makers were guillotined because of their association with aristocratic dress.

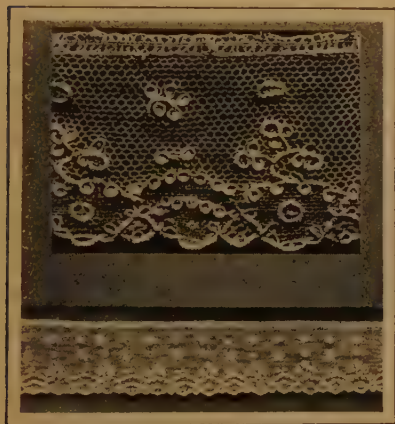
In 1789 the States General, in arranging the costume of the *Tiers état* (tee-yares zay-tah), ordered the nobility to wear a lace cravat. Napo-

leon, who was a great lover of lace, made the wearing of the Alençon and Brussels obligatory at Court. He gave many orders for lace with new patterns in which the Bonaparte bees were generally present. In the nineteenth century England began to patronize her own industries. Queen Adelaide had a splendid dress of Honiton. Queen Victoria followed her example, and had her wedding dress, which cost £1,000 (\$5,000), made of "Honiton sprigs."

In 1840 there was a rage for Chantilly black lace shawls, veils and parasol covers. Our great-grandmothers were able to buy importations in the New York shops. Again, in the middle of the century, the

Empress Eugénie made lace popular. As was natural, she favored her own Spanish lace, and loved the deep flounces that one still sees in Spain. The most splendid lace dress of the period became hers in 1859. This was of *Point d'Alençon*. Napoleon III bought it for 200,000 francs (\$40,000). In later years the Empress gave it to Pope Leo XIII.

Eugénie also made black lace popular again; and the well-dressed Parisians, Londoners and Americans all had their black lace shawls, barbes, parasols, fans and "sacques."



POINT D'ALENÇON

The chain pattern outlining the scallops

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## SUPPLEMENTARY READING

A HISTORY OF LACE By Mrs. E. Bury Paliser  
Revised by M. Jourdain and Alice Dryden  
HAND-MADE LACE By Mrs. F. Nevill Jackson  
OLD LACE By M. Jourdain  
EMBROIDERY AND LACE By Ernest Lefebure

THE LACE DICTIONARY By C. R. Clifford  
POINT AND PILLOW LACE By A. M. S.  
ANTICHE TRINE ITALIANE By Elisa Ricci  
SEVEN CENTURIES OF LACE  
By Mrs. John Hungerford Pollen

\* \* \* Information concerning the above books and articles may be had on application to the Editor



# THE OPEN LETTER

"DEAR EDITOR: The Mentors are so delightful—and so tantalizing. For instance, in the 'Precious Gems'—which is a gem in itself—there is a Thibetan Holy Picture made of gems. On the back of this picture is a description of the Peacock Throne. And, again, there is a picture of Queen Elizabeth in her court costume. I would like a full description of this costume, and of the jewels she wears. In most cases in The Mentor, the 'monograph' on the back of a gravure picture describes the subject of the picture. Why do you not always do so? Please tell me about the Holy Picture, and especially its size. I know that you think size is very 'material' and has little to do with art, but I like to know and I am very 'material.' Even the grim world of Shades will lose its terrors for me if I may 'make and measure it.'"—*Louisa Brent.*

As a rule we print on the back of a gravure picture a description of that particular subject, but it is not possible to do so in every case. There are many interesting and beautiful pictures about which very little is known—there are others that are sufficiently explained in their titles. That picture of Queen Elizabeth is an interesting one, but no descriptive matter concerning the costume can be found. The title, however, makes clear what it is. The Thibetan Holy Picture is a beautiful curiosity—a sacred picture composed entirely of gems. That fact is stated in the title, and that is about all there is to say concerning it.

★ ★ ★

There is another answer to the question. We frequently have important subjects that demand special treatment in these monographs, and *no pictures to go with them.* Our "Gem" number would not have been complete without the story of the famous Diamond Necklace—or without an account of the Peacock Throne. But there are no authentic pictures of these two subjects. So we print these stories on the backs of pictures that have self-explanatory titles, and about which there is no descriptive matter. We link two things together—an important story that has no picture, and an interesting picture that has no descriptive story—and we give our readers the benefit of both. The essential thing is to give Mentor readers the greatest amount of interesting information possible within the limits of each number.

★ ★ ★

Our correspondent asks—rather apologetically—for the size of the Holy Picture. Don't apologize. If you are really inter-

ested in knowing it, we are glad to tell you. The picture is  $14\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{4}$  inches. We give the dimensions of pictures where there is a good and sufficient reason for doing so. We stated the dimensions of the original pictures in the case of the gravure reproductions of Miniatures in Mentor No. 123. This was done because the size of a Miniature is one of its interesting features. In most cases the size of a painting is neither important nor interesting. It certainly has little to do with its art value. In the case of a good picture, size does not count, and in the case of a poor picture, the bigger it is the greater the offense.

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Just a word about Mentor Service. I don't think that some of our readers appreciate what it really means. We get many letters daily from people asking questions on subjects in the various fields of knowledge, and we have a staff of no less than twelve who devote time specially to replying to these inquiries. If we printed in The Mentor the responses of interest that we supply in one week, the material would fill fifty Mentors. Those that take advantage of this service value it. "I want to express my appreciation of the comprehensive manner in which you answered me," writes one of our members. "I had no idea that you took so much trouble. I think it would be well to call attention to the fact that The Mentor Service is a great time-saver. There is so much that the 'man of the street' has no time to read. Most people would prefer to write to The Mentor and have you dig out of the mine of the world's knowledge just what they want to know. It saves them time and trouble."

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Why not try The Mentor Service—you who have not written to us? If you want to know further about subjects covered in The Mentor, or want to have a question answered in the various fields of knowledge, or want assistance in a course of reading, or a program for a reading club, write to us. We have helped others, and we can help you.

*W.D. Moffat*  
EDITOR



NEAR BAR HARBOR, MAINE, BY GEORGE H. SMILLIE

Geo. H. Smillie







GEORGE H. SMILLIE was born in the old Greenwich Village section of New York City in 1840. Tradition in the family had told him that the work of an artist was a poor business; so, on leaving school, he entered the counting house of a manufacturing firm. About three years of this was sufficient to inform him that

he was not "cut out" for a business career.

After leaving business he took up drawing under his father's guidance, until he could decide what direction his life work should take. As his father was a distinguished engraver and an Academician, he had naturally been thrown among pictures and painters; and he showed so much facility in his drawing that it was thought advisable for him to take up some form of pictorial art. Consequently, in 1861, he entered the studio of James M. Hart, N. A., then at the height of his career as a landscape painter. In 1862 Smillie had a picture accepted at the Academy. In 1864 he was elected an Associate Member of the National Academy, but not until 1882 did he receive the distinction of Academician, on a picture purchased for Mr. William Lidderdale, governor of the Bank of England. Later Sir Henry Irving, on his first visit to this country, purchased two of Smillie's paintings to take to England with him.

In 1867 his brother James, with several other painters, who were interested in the water color medium, formed the American Water Color Society, which led Smillie to take up that medium, and he was soon admitted to membership in the Society. The object of the Society being to exploit the beauties of the transparent color, the use of body color or opaque white was considered a weakness, and frowned upon accordingly by some of the members, as virtually compromising with the methods of oil painting; hence it was felt that it was not "playing the game." However, as some found the manipulation of the transparent color to be much more difficult, the admixture of body white became more prevalent.

Smillie never favored the offering of prizes in art work, as it necessitated contest and struggle, which destroyed the mental poise and the spontaneity of the effort; but, as water color work had become very popular, the American Art Association projected an exhibition of water colors, in which prizes were to be awarded for different degrees of excellence in water color work. Finding himself in town unusually early that autumn, on account of illness in his family, Smillie cast about for something to engage his time and mind, and determined to paint a pic-

ture for that exhibition. The sound of the ocean, where he had been sketching on the coast, was still in his ears, so he secured the largest sheet of water color paper he could find and proceeded to get on it as much of the Atlantic Ocean as he could, with just enough shore in the foreground to save him from getting wet feet; and he produced a water color to which was awarded a first prize. This was a substantial sum of money, calculated to produce a frame of mental peace and quietness in himself as well as the landlord and the color and canvas man. This picture was purchased by George A. Hearn, on his return from a trip to the Far West.

In 1871 Smillie painted an important water color, "Under the Pines of the Yosemite at Evening," but the bulk of his time has been devoted to his work in oils. Another excellent water color was "A Group of Cedars," which was purchased by the Erie, Pennsylvania, public library. He was for four years treasurer of the American Water Color Society and active in its affairs for many more, at the time when water colors had attained high favor among picture lovers and buyers.

Of late years he has devoted himself almost exclusively to painting in oil, and has numerous important works in private and public collections.

Samuel Isham, the noted art critic, in speaking of Smillie's work, says, "There is in the paintings of George H. Smillie a special note of gaiety and brightness, which is personal and recognizable. There is nothing in his work that is antiquated or out-of-date. It is something of a surprise to learn how long he has been practicing his profession."

It is interesting to note that Mr. Smillie's wife, Mrs. N. S. J. Smillie, was a popular painter in water colors some years ago, before family cares asserted a superior claim to her attention. She was one of three women who were admitted to active membership in the American Water Color Society; later it was decided to make all women members a separate class of associate members. Mrs. Smillie used the medium of water color very successfully in figures and flowers—the latter not as botanical studies, but for color and descriptive effects. Her color sense was very fine, and she used it with great success in her pictures.







**T**HE favorite book of Frederick Stuart Church as a boy was his geography. The reason for this was that the blank backs of the pages devoted to the big maps had such beautiful expanses of clean white paper for the youthful artist to decorate with his sketches.

Church was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on Decem-

ber 1, 1842. This little frontier town was a wild place in those days and its educational advantages were few. The boy received the usual common school education, however; but he probably enjoyed more the occasional diversion of chasing black bears through the snow banks in the village streets.

His earliest art instruction was received from a Mr. Harting, a landscape painter from Holland. To earn money for these lessons the boy used to tramp for miles through the snow delivering daily newspapers. When he was only fourteen years old, he went to work for the American Express Company in Chicago. There he remained until he was twenty-six. All the time he was drawing. His comrades christened him "the artist chap."

When the Civil War broke out Church enlisted with the first Illinois troops which responded to President Lincoln's call for volunteers. He served as a private for three months, and when his term expired he immediately re-enlisted for three years. His battery of light artillery served in the division commanded by General Lew Wallace—the author of "Ben Hur"—and took part in such engagements as Shiloh, Chattanooga and the siege of Vicksburg. Later Church saw service with Sherman's army on its famous march to the sea.

When he was through with the war, Church attended the Chicago Academy of Design, studying under Walter Shirlaw. Later he went to the National Academy of Design in New York.

From the very first his talent developed along original lines. His earliest models were birds, frogs and turtles. Wild animals

interested him greatly, especially the lion, the polar bear and the Royal Bengal tiger. He used to spend a great deal of time studying and sketching about the cages in the Central Park Zoological collection. In this way he gained an intimate knowledge of the form, expression and character of his animal models. Frequently he would make hundreds of pencil drawings for a single picture.

Church was one of the founders of the Art Students' League in New York, in 1875. He served for six years on the Council of the National Academy of Design. He was one of the early members of the Society of American Artists, and for many years an active officer of the American Water Color Society and of the New York Etching Club.

In addition to his painting, Church has written and illustrated some short stories of singular liveliness of fancy and vivid imaginative power. His work as a painter-etcher quickly gained recognition abroad. As an appreciative art critic once wrote, "There was a charm and freshness about his work that not only captured the public, but appealed to the men returning from Continental studios. . . . They (his pictures) have the simplicity of a story told to children."

The dominating note of this painter's work is its ideality, its individual poetic expressiveness. This is always guided by a sympathetic intuition that has ever a kindly bent toward the humblest of Nature's creatures.

Church does a great deal of his work in New York City, and has a large studio far up in the tower of Carnegie Hall





Wm. W. Kaye.

ORIGINAL IN THE COLLECTION OF A. N. BERRY





YOUNG man, working as clerk in his father's shoe shop, lost his position because he wasted too much wrapping paper and too much time in making pictures. Not many years later this unsuccessful shoe clerk had made a name for himself as one of the leading artists in the United States. This young man was William Merritt

Chase, who was born in Franklin, Ind., on November 1, 1849. After he had shown such a great desire to be a painter, his father permitted him to study art under B. F. Hays at Indianapolis. Then Chase went to New York and studied under J. O. Eaton. Still later he was able to go to Munich. This, as he often said, "proved the turning point in my life." In Munich he studied under A. Wagner and Piloty and made great progress.

In 1878 two young artists set sail together to return to America. One of these was Carroll Beckwith and the other was Chase. Both soon became noted painters. At first Chase taught with success for some years in the School of the Art Students' League in New York City. Then he established a school of his own. In the meantime Chase had founded the Society of American Artists; and later on, with some other artists who had separated from the Academy of Design, began holding exhibitions of his own work.

Chase was a varied painter. He did landscape, still life and portraits; but it is as a painter of portraits that he is probably best known. His sitters numbered some of the most noted men and women of his time. Among the most important of these portraits are his "Whistler," his "Sargent," his "Dorothy," and his "Alice." One of his paintings was the first American portrait to be hung in the Luxembourg Gallery in Paris. He took first honors at the exhibitions there. The Italian Government asked Sargent and Chase for their own portraits by themselves, to be hung in the Uffizi Gallery at Florence, alongside the classic portraits of old masters by themselves.

Chase's pictures seem to show that he always caught a subject at the right moment. His own children understood this trait. One day his little daughter, standing at the window and looking at the sky, cried: "Papa, come quickly: here is a cloud posing for you!"

Chase's first well-known still life picture was painted in London. He had been attracted by a cod-fish in a shop, and succeeded in hiring it for a couple of hours. The picture that he painted was finally bought by the Corcoran Gallery at Washington for \$2,000. When Chase returned to London he called on the fishmonger and asked him to take some of

the money, but he declined, saying, "It were a good portrait, to be sure; but were it not a fine cod?"

In addition to being a great painter, Chase was an excellent teacher. Many of his pupils have now obtained fame for themselves. He was a severe critic, but he was also a sympathetic master. One day he was walking along the beach at Shinnecock, Long Island. A young man, shabbily clothed, was sketching there. Chase stopped, looked at the picture, and then said: "Young man, why don't you come to my criticisms? Come to the next one." The boy would have long before applied for admittance, if he had had sufficient funds; now he attended gladly. When looking at one of this pupil's pictures, Chase pointed at him and said: "Young man, you will be a painter some day." That prophecy has since been justified. This young man is one of the most distinctive of the younger American painters.

Chase impressed on all his pupils three things—truth, interesting treatment and quality. There was another thing with which Chase used to impress his students—a blank canvas on a frame high up on the wall of his studio. He called it his masterpiece and said: "That is my best work. I have painted on it thousands of times, and I know that I am getting on with my art because each year I paint a better picture there. Not that I shall ever actually touch a brush to that canvas; it is for the pictures that I paint in my mind, for the ideals towards which my actual works are directed. I am sorry that I cannot show you that picture quite as I see it. I am always trying, but it keeps ahead of me the more I advance, and must remain something that no one can see but myself—the full measure of what my years as a painter have led me to realize of life and nature and art."

Chase won honors both at home and abroad. During the last years of his life he was a well-known and much admired figure in New York City. He was alert and moved with short, quick steps; his hat was always different from any other; and his piercing gaze, bristling mustache and beard, accentuated by aggressive eyeglasses with their broad, black ribbon, made him a striking personality. He died on October 25, 1916.





Julian Rix.

ORIGINAL IN THE COLLECTION OF C. M. BRYAN





THE name of Julian Rix was not widely known. This was due entirely to his modesty and a curious dislike for public attention; for he was one of the most talented of American artists. He was able to find purchasers for every picture that he painted, and consequently he never exhibited at the National Academy, nor did

he contribute to public exhibitions.

Julian W. Rix was born in San Francisco in 1851. As a boy he was fond of out-door life and consequently as he grew older developed his talent for art by sketching landscapes. However, until he came East, about 1888, his work was comparatively unknown outside of California.

Once established in the East, his work attracted immediate attention and was soon in demand. In 1895 some of his landscapes exhibited in New York City revealed him as a landscape painter of unique distinction and striking individuality. He was an independent worker and thinker.

The earlier paintings of Rix were of subjects for the most part found in California, and among these is his well-known "Golden Gate." Likewise, he haunted the red-woods and the groves of big trees in California. He loved to paint deep shadows, and knew all the moods of Nature.

For a number of years Rix had a studio in New Jersey near Paterson. In the

country round about, he found many subjects for pictures.

Many of the artist's paintings are in large collections. In these pictures is reflected his temperament, which was a genial and sunny one. Some of the best of his work was done within the last five years of his life, although poor health part of that time hampered him a great deal. His art was characterized by originality, vigorous treatment, good composition, fine, strong color and an interesting point of view toward nature that was peculiarly his own. Some of his admirers place him with Tryon, Ranger and Murphy. Rix was a powerful painter of dramatic landscapes. His work was full of vitality, and his style is distinctly opposed to that of his contemporaries in American landscape painting. For that reason he was a figure apart in the painting world during his lifetime, and his work excited a great deal of diverse comment.

Rix died at New York City in November, 1903.



A GRAY DAY, BY J. FRANCIS MURPHY





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## AMERICAN WATER COLOR PAINTERS

*J. Francis Murphy*

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### FIVE

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**M**URPHY has been called the Corot of America. The resemblance is largely superficial; he is closer to the root of things; his sympathies sink deeper into the earth; his two feet are planted on the soil, and he conveys an impression of absolute, though idealized reality. As he himself said once, "I paint the woods I saw as a boy."

John Francis Murphy was born at Oswego, New York, on December 11, 1853. He moved to New York in 1875, and taught himself art. His career presents an inspiring contribution to the records of artistic endeavor. His early years were a perpetual struggle with poverty. Only a man of rare and sturdy integrity could have kept his ideals through all the long, sordid fight. It was probably the crucible in which his soul was tested; and from the test Murphy emerged triumphant.

Murphy first exhibited at the National Academy of Design in 1876. In 1885 he received a prize for his painting, "Tints of a Vanished Past." In the same year he also received the Webb Prize of the Society of American Artists. At that time he was elected an Associate Member of the National Academy. Two years later he was made a full member. Murphy is also a member of the American Water Color Society. He lives in New York City.

Murphy paints only ten or twelve pictures a year. "I have had few wants," he said, "and, therefore, I have been doubly able to remain my own master." He is a remarkable exception in a mercenary generation. Some six years ago one of his pictures in a sale sold for \$2,600. At that time he was asking for the same sized picture only \$650. When another painting

of his, called "The Hillside Farm," brought \$4,000, it sold for a little over four times what the artist had originally received for it.

Usually a landscape painter is first an artist and then a lover of the out of doors. Murphy is primarily a naturalist and a lover of the open; he is a painter last. Eight months out of the year he lives in the country. During that time he never touches a brush; but all the time his mind is absorbing details. It is during the winter that the results of all this appear.

Murphy is a severe critic of his own work, and he is an absolute believer in the ideals of his art. He considers painting anything but a haphazard affair, and is a worker of infinite pains. An artist told him one day of his difficulties with the drawing of leaves. Murphy's advice was quick and to the point: "Make a lot of drawings from nature with a sharp pencil," he said. That is in part the secret of his success—the willingness to go back to nature and to take pains.

Murphy is an artist who has had the pleasure and the privilege of knowing that he is popular while still alive. One critic has said: "He may be safely placed in that great company of painters who have made American landscape art as significant as the work of those men of 1830, who formed the Barbizon School."







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## AMERICAN WATER COLOR PAINTERS

Henry W. Ranger

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SIX

**T**OWARD the close of last year one of the foremost painters of American landscape died. This was Henry Ward Ranger, of whom one critic said: "I know of no artist whose pictures are so thoroughly representative of the man himself as are those of Mr. Ranger, and whose powerful physical personality and rugged strength

are so reflected in his own canvases."

Behind this unusual energy there was a gentle, tender strain of poetry. His work exemplified at once the vigor and the invitingness of an American landscape.

Henry Ward Ranger was born near Rochester, N. Y., in January, 1858. He was practically self-taught, for except for a year at Syracuse University, where he took an art course, he worked by himself. Ranger moved to New York City and took a studio there in the early seventies. It was then that he became acquainted for the first time with the works of the Barbizon painters. Ever thereafter he was strongly influenced by their art. Ranger worked abroad for many years. He first attracted attention to himself in water color painting. While living in Holland he enjoyed the friendship of Josef Israels, Mauve and other leaders of the Dutch school. Ranger also studied in England and France; but at last he returned home and confined himself strictly to views about New York or at Lyme, Connecticut.

The public knew little of this artist. He was opposed to competition for honors of any sort, and he rarely exhibited in pub-

lic displays, confining himself to modest groups of his own works at private galleries. In 1906 he was made a member of the National Academy, and he also belonged to the American Water Color Society.

Ranger, in addition to being a painter of note, had also great ability as a musical critic. In his earlier days, when struggling for fame and fortune, he used to help himself along by writing criticisms of operas and concerts for the newspapers.

Ranger's art was based on a sympathetic appreciation of nature. In his pictures there is always a single dominating idea. For all of his paintings Ranger made out-door sketches. Sometimes these were careful pencil studies. Sometimes they were freer oil sketches. From these sketches the larger pictures were painted. Often he would go back to the sketch and work that up also to the level of a picture.

Even before his death, on November 7, 1916, Ranger was already a great influence. At exhibits of his work students would come day after day and fill sketch books with his views. This influence will continue to grow stronger as time passes.